

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7328

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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SUBJ: RESETTLEMENT OF INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES IN AUSTRALIA

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. GOA HAS AGREED TO ACCEPT APPROXIMATELY 800 MORE INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES INTO AUSTRALIA. END SUMMARY.

2. MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION, MICHAEL MACKELLAR, AUTHORIZED THE FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE ON JANUARY 21: QTE AUSTRALIA TO TAKE MORE INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES.

QTE AUSTRALIA WILL OFFER SANCTUARY TO MORE INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES.

QTE ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY THE MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS, THE HON. M.J.R. MACKELLAR, SAID THOSE TO BE CONSIDERED WOULD BE REFUGEES WHO HAD ALREADY APPLIED TO AUSTRALIAN EMBASSIES OR IN SOME OTHER WAY HAD INDICATED THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS INCLUDING THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES THAT AUSTRALIA WAS THEIR CHOICE FOR A NEW HOME.

QTE THE GOVERNMENT WOULD MEET THE COSTS OF AIR-LIFTING THE
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REFUGEES TO AUSTRALIA AND WOULD ALSO ASSIST IN PROVIDING

ACCOMMODATION AND IN SEEKING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM WHEN THEY REACHED AUSTRALIA.

QTE MR. MACKELLAR SAID THE BULK OF THE PLANNED INTAKE OF REFUGEES WOULD COME FROM THAILAND WHERE VIETNAMESE, CAMBODIANS AND LAOTIANS WERE LIVING IN CROWDED CAMPS. QTE HOWEVER, INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES WHO HAD ALREADY APPLIED OR HAD BEEN NOMINATED TO COME TO AUSTRALIA WOULD BE CONSIDERED IF THEY HAD NOT OBTAINED PERMANENT SETTLEMENT REGARDLESS OF WHERE THEY ARE NOW LIVING OUTSIDE THEIR FORMER HOMELANDS.

QTE INNER QUOTE A TEAM OF EXPERIENCED OFFICERS FROM MY DEPARTMENT AND A DOCTOR FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ARE PREPARING TO FLY TO THAILAND TO SELECT REFUGEES FOR ENTRY, END INNER QUOTE MR. MACKELLAR ADDED.

QTE INNER QUOTE IN OTHER COUNTRIES IMMIGRATION OFFICERS ON THE SPOT WILL EXAMINE APPLICATIONS.

QTE INNER QUOTE PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO REFUGEES CLOSELY RELATED TO PEOPLE ALREADY LIVING IN AUSTRALIA. THE PRIORITY WILL BE TO REUNITE SPOUSES AND DEPENDENT CHILDREN WITH THEIR FAMILIES IN AUSTRALIA.

QTE INNER QUOTE THEN WE WILL CONSIDER PARENTS, FIANCES AND FIANCEES, NON-DEPENDENT CHILDREN, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AND OTHER REFUGEES WHO HAVE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH AUSTRALIA. END INNER QUOTE

QTE THE GOVERNMENT ALSO WOULD GIVE PRIORITY TO APPLICATIONS FROM REFUGEES WHO HAD WORKED WITH AUSTRALIAN EMBASSIES OR WITH AUSTRALIAN MILITARY OR CIVIL AID PROGRAMMES IN INDO-CHINA.

QTE INNER QUOTE WE EXPECT THAT THIS INITIATIVE WILL ENABLE UP TO 800 INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES TO COME TO AUSTRALIA AND MAKE A NEW LIFE HERE, END INNER QUOTE MR. MACKELLAR SAID. END QUOTE
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3. EMBASSY POL COUNS HAD PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED NEW GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON RESETTLING INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES IN AUSTRALIA WITH MACKELLAR ON JANUARY 14 WHEN MACKELLAR REQUESTED INFORMATION ON 27 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN MALAYSIA (CANBERRA 0283). AT THAT TIME, MACKELLAR INDICATED THAT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOA WAS FORMULATING A NEW MORE RECEPTIVE POLICY. THEREFORE WE HAD DELAYED APPROACH REQUESTED IN STATE 9753.

4. IN A MEETING WITH MACKELLAR FOLLOWING RELEASE OF THE ABOVE ANNOUNCEMENT, POL COUNS CONGRATULATED THE MINISTER ON THE GOA'S ACTION AND OFFERED U.S. EMBASSY BANGKOK AND CONSULAR OFFICES IN THAILAND ASSISTANCE PER STATE 9753.

5. MACKELLAR WAS VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE OFFER OF U.S. ASSISTANCE AND INTENDS TO ASK DFA TO INSTRUCT THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IN BANGKOK TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE U.S. EMBASSY. AN AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION TEAM PLANS TO ARRIVE IN BANGKOK AROUND JANUARY 30 TO BEGIN PROCESSING OF REFUGEES. MAIN PROBLEMS AT PRESENT ARE TO LOCATE REFUGEES AND THEN TO TRANSPORT THEM TO CENTRAL HOLDING POINT IN BANGKOK PRIOR TO FLYING THEM TO AUSTRALIA. MACKELLAR ALSO SAID THE 27 REFUGEES REFERRED TO IN CANBERRA 283 ALSO WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR CONSIDERATION AS IMMIGRANTS TO AUSTRALIA UNDER NEW PROGRAM. HOWEVER, HE AGAIN ASKED IF WE HAD RECEIVED ANY INFORMATION ON THEIR STATUS AND ON THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR EVENTUAL ENTRY INTO THE U.S.

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